

General Assembly of North Carolina

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December 13, 2012

Governor Bob McDonnell
Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Re: Opposition to possible uranium mining in Virginia

Dear Governor McDonnell,

The Environmental Review Commission is a permanent joint commission of the North Carolina General Assembly. The Commission is charged with reviewing, studying, and recommending actions that relate to the environment, public health, and the protection of the environment and public health in North Carolina.

The Commission has received information about the possible elimination of the legislative moratorium on uranium mining in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the mining project proposed by Virginia Uranium, Inc. in Coles Hill in Pittsylvania County. The proposed Coles Hill uranium mining site is located upstream from John H. Kerr reservoir, Lake Gaston, and many communities in northeast North Carolina. The proposed mining and milling operations may produce 11 million cubic yards of radioactive tailings stored in aboveground impoundments of up to 40 acres in size.

The Commission learned that the modeled impacts of a catastrophic breach of an aboveground uranium tailings impoundment on downstream water quality in Kerr Lake and Lake Gaston could result in radiation above the United States Environmental Protection Agency Maximum Contaminant Levels for up to three months during wet years and up to sixteen months during dry years. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources stated that a release of radioactive tailings could have devastating adverse socioeconomic impacts on the communities of northeastern North Carolina including:

- Impacts to the public water supply of more than 118,000 North Carolinians

- Impacts to numerous industrial facilities
- Impacts on over 60 agricultural operations in Bertie, Granville, Halifax, Vance, and Warren counties
- Impacts on recreation and tourism at Kerr Lake and Lake Gaston with possible economic losses of more than \$15 million per year

At its December 13, 2012 meeting, the Commission expressed significant concern regarding the potential lifting of the existing legislative moratorium on uranium mining in Virginia. The Commission requests that you consider the possible adverse impacts to Kerr Lake, Lake Gaston, and many communities in northeastern North Carolina if the existing legislative moratorium on uranium mining is lifted and mining activities commence by Virginia Uranium, Inc. at Coles Hill.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator David Rouzer

Representative Mitch Gillespie

Representative Ruth Samuelson

Co-chairs, Environmental Review Commission

cc: Members of the Environmental Review Commission
[Members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation]
Tom Reeder
Jeffrey Hudson